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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, August 5, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "The Small Daughter's Wardrobe." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Dresses for the Little Girl."

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The problem of clothes is with us women always, whether we are three or thirty or three hundred.

Today I've been thinking about clothes for the three-year-old, because I've just read the new leaflet on dresses for little girls. (I think I mentioned it to you yesterday, didn't I?) The exact title is "Dresses for Little Girls." Reading it set me to thinking of the way little girls were dressed back in the last century. Did you ever read a book called "Elsie Dinsmore"? Did you ever read another called "Little Women"? Well, then, you will recall what a trial clothes were in those days to any little girl who wasn't a prim and proper goody-goody.

Back in Victorian times Eliza Jane, aged three or four, was obliged to wear clothes having a most restraining influence--dresses with high necks and long sleeves and tight waists. If, at an early age, she had an inclination to kick up her heels and run, it was soon discouraged. Her clothes made such activity too difficult. And so did her elders. She was told to be, not a tomboy, but a little lady, and was clothed accordingly in dresses that made her look as nearly as possible like a small edition of the grown-up ladies around her. No wonder so many small daughters came to the conclusion early that it was no fun to be a girl and that boys had all the enjoyment in life.

Just think how amazed young Eliza Jane of sixty years ago would have been if someone had sent her one of these leaflets. And her Victorian mamma as well as her Victorian papa would have received the shock of their lives from reading it.

For here are eight whole pages discussing the right clothes for small girls. And not one word anywhere about frocks that are lady-like, proper and feminine. Instead, right on the first page it says that dresses should be comfortable, convenient, simple and sturdy. Yes, actually sturdy. Think of that word for a girl! And comfortable, mind you. Clothes for little girls today, it says, are designed to teach self-dependence and allow for all kinds



of active play. No more meek and timid clinging vines. No more anemic little Goldilocks who spend their lives sitting on a cushion and sewing a fine seam. It really looks as if the clothing specialists considered health, and happiness, and the formation of good habits the most important items in clothing at this age.

I'm pretty sure that any of the small models who illustrate the pages of the leaflet could step right out in those becoming dresses they have on and go romping happily with their brothers. Yes, and I'm sure they could skin the cat or swing on the grapevine just as well as any little boy. All the dresses pictured are simple, hang straight from the shoulder and are loose and unbelted to allow freedom of movement.

If you want young Clara Bernice or Sally Louise to learn self-reliance and independence early, think of her clothes. Are they arranged so that they will encourage her to put them on by herself? Can she button and unbutton them easily? Are the plackets large enough to let them slip on and off comfortably? Are the openings placed in front so they can be reached easily?

This brings us to another question. What are some of the features that make a dress comfortable on a child? The fit of the shoulders, for one thing. Arm holes and the cut of the sleeves for another. Necklines for a third.

Shoulders should be fitted to hold the dress comfortably in place and prevent shifting. Yokes made by shirring drawn in ~~tight~~ fitted stay-pieces; or stitched down pleats; or tucks, help to give a good fit. Below such yokes, fullness swings loose across the back and chest of the dress. This allows plenty of room for action and the sleeves will yield to quick movements without straining the dress.

I wish I had time to go into more details about this matter of fitting the child. I'd also like to give you some hints from the clothing specialists on construction and style, and on fabrics and trimmings to use. But I have a menu on my mind. And a fine recipe to go with it. So I'll just promise to send the new leaflet, which contains all this helpful information, to any mother who asks for one. Any mother, did I say? I meant any mother, aunt, grandmother, uncle or anyone else interested in the little girl's wardrobe.

One of my friends, who likes to plan her housework several days in advance, asked me if I would occasionally give a menu for Friday on a Wednesday. So the Menu Specialist has planned a Friday dinner for me to give today. You can think over the menu today, order your supplies tomorrow, and cook and eat the meal on Friday. That ought to give enough time, I should say, for even the most forehanded housekeeper.

Of course, the dinner starts with fish. I won't say what fish, because I don't know whether the man of your house is going to catch some speckled trout between now and Friday or not. And I don't know what kind of fish you like best of those that are now in your market. So I leave the fish to you.

But with it, let's have tomatoes - stuffed and baked whole, if you have fresh ones, or scalloped, if you are using canned. Next--spoon bread. Any kind of corn bread is good with fish, but this is especially good, and it takes the place both of bread and a starchy vegetable. See the green cookbook



for the recipe. Then--mixed vegetable salad. And for dessert, green apple pie, made from the small, juicy, tart, early apples now ready.

Once more for that menu. Fish; Tomatoes, stuffed whole or scalloped; Spoon bread; Mixed vegetable salad; and, for dessert, Green apple pie.

For the salad you can use several kinds of cooked vegetables from your refrigerator. It will also need something crisp, like radishes, cucumber, celery, or cabbage or it might be a combination of raw vegetables. Either will be good with this menu. And the salad doesn't have to be especially tart today because you have plenty of acid in the tomatoes and the green apple pie.

And that's the recipe I'm giving you to top off your fish dinner -- green apple pie.

Perhaps I'd better call it early apple pie. You see, the hard, very under-ripe apples, the kind of "green" apples the traditional naughty little boy takes from his neighbor's tree too early in the season, -- that kind of hard green apple won't do for this recipe. You need the juicy little early green cooking apples.

How many ingredients in green apple pie? Six. Here they are.

6 to 8 green apples	1/4 teaspoon of salt
1 cup of sugar	2 tablespoons of butter, and
1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon	Pastry.

Just six. I'll repeat them. (Repeat)

Pare, core, and slice the apples. Place them in a saucpan with a very small quantity of water. Cook with a cover until the apples are partly tender. Add the sugar, cinnamon, salt, and butter and stir until blended. Line a deep pie tin with pastry, and fill with the apples. Add the top sheet of pastry. Put the pie in a moderately hot oven (400° F.) for 10 minutes. Then lower the temperature to more moderate heat (375° F.) and bake the pie for 20 to 25 minutes - or until the apples are tender and the crust is golden brown. If the pie seems too tart, sugar may be added when served.

Tomorrow: "More Questions and Answers."

